



OHIO PUBLIC LIBRARY INFORMATION NETWORK

2323 West 5th Avenue, Suite 130 • Columbus, Ohio 43204 • 614.728.5252 (phone) • 614.728.5256 (fax)

May 1, 2007

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Rural Health Care Pilot Project

Dear Rural Health Care Pilot Project Review Committee:

As Executive Director of OPLIN, the Ohio Public Library Information Network, I am extremely pleased to support and participate in the proposed OneCommunity Rural Health Care project. OneCommunity's ongoing efforts to increase broadband connectivity and foster healthcare technology initiatives play a crucial role in Northeast Ohio. This FCC project provides a critical next-step towards health care solutions in the region.

OPLIN provides fast, free public Internet access throughout the state, through Ohio's 251 independent local public library systems, as well as providing all Ohio residents with the use of high-quality databases and journals not freely available on the World Wide Web. Through the combination of content and access, residents throughout the state have the important educational benefits available through the Internet. A partner of NetWellness since 1995, OPLIN provides state-wide availability of this valuable resource in support of health and educational goals.

Successful implementation of the FCC pilot project will provide essential infrastructure to connect Northeast Ohio's rural communities, and will complement the existing OPLIN network. It will set the stage for greater collaboration among health care facilities, university medical centers, major teaching centers, and colleges and universities throughout Ohio and the Northeast region. In particular I am excited about the possibilities of collaborations among health providers and public libraries. Librarians are natural educators, and will bring a unique dynamic to this project. Teaming health care providers and librarians to guide patients through the maze of health information on the Internet is an idea long-overdue.

I am particularly pleased to be involved with this initiative as it explicitly joins the library and health care communities in a dedicated project and points the way to important e-health initiatives. Ohioans have tremendous health care needs across our state. Addressing these needs with a combined health system and public education strategy holds great promise. Providers, health systems, government and the consumers all have an important role to play in the next generation of health care. I am delighted to join our respective efforts to achieve our shared long-term goals.

Sincerely,

OPLIN Executive Director